

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 8th July 2014

STANDARDS UPDATE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: LAW, DEMOCRACY AND PEOPLE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE

To update the Committee on matters relating to the ethical framework since the last Standards Committee meeting in November 2013 and to review the Committee's terms of reference.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Committee review the Terms of Reference and decide if any changes are required;

2.2 That the report is noted.

3. SUMMARY

3.1 There have been 2 new Code of Conduct complaints made since the last report to this Committee was prepared, neither have been referred for investigation.

4. PREVIOUS MINUTES

4.1 Standards Committee – 13th December 2012, 19th September 2012, 10th July 2013, 19th November 2014

5. INFORMATION

5.1 The Monitoring Officer provides updates on the following matters

Standards Committee Terms of Reference

Every year this Committee reviews its terms of reference. The Committee is asked to consider whether provisions attached at Appendix 1 are fit for purpose or in need of updating. The Monitoring Officer is not proposing any changes to the Terms of Reference at present.

Complaints

There have been 2 formal complaints received since the last meeting in November 2013, further details are below.

Time Period	Number of complaints	Complaints against Borough Councillors	Complaint against Parish/ Town Councillors	Outcome: No Further Action	Outcome: Further action/ investigation
November 2013 – July 2014	2 (one of these related to two Cllrs)	0	2 (In the complaint against 2 Cllrs they were also Borough Cllrs)	2	0

In addition to these formal complaints the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer have again continued to give advice and information to elected members, members of the public and officers from both the Borough and Parish Councils on Code of Conduct matters.

Training

A training session for Borough Councillors took place on 20th November at Addenbrooke House. The training was provided by the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer. Our records show that 24 Borough Councillors attended. There was little in the way of feedback but some advice on Interests was addressed after the training. Unless there are any significant changes to the ethical framework, it is proposed that no further Code of Conduct training will be provided until after the 2015 local elections. However, individual councillors can ask the Monitoring Officer for information and training at any time.

The 'Independent Person'

As mentioned in the last report, the Independent Persons attended training from Hoey Ainscough on 5th November. This was a training session hosted by Telford & Wrekin. Feedback from the training was good.

The annual subscription to Hoey Ainscough to provide independent support to the Independent Persons and advice and support to the Monitoring Officer has been renewed for a further year.

5.2 Equal Opportunities

No implications

5.3 Environmental Impact

None

5.4 Legal Comment

The statutory requirements for a Code of Conduct and ethical framework for Councillors is set out at part 1, chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011. Any changes to the terms of reference must comply with this legislation.

5.5 Links with Corporate Priorities

The work of the Committee contributes to the Council's co-operative values of openness and honesty, fairness and respect and ownership.

5.6 Opportunities and Risks

Risks relating to this particular report are low provided statutory provisions are followed.

5.7 Financial Implications

The cost of standards investigations together with the management and administration of the Standards Committee are met from within the Legal Services revenue budget. The renewal of the Hoey Ainscough subscription was also met from the Legal services budget. Any variations will be reported as part of the financial monitoring process. No other financial implications arise from this report.

6. WARD IMPLICATIONS

No ward specific implications

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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